

comprehensive management plan

november 1980

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON
MINERAL KING



NATIONAL PARKS / CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

Mineral King was added to Sequoia National Park by passage of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-625). The intent of Congress was to ensure the preservation of the natural and scenic features of Mineral King for present and future generations and to enhance public enjoyment of the area. One provision of the act required preparation of a comprehensive management plan. Citing specific authorities applicable to the National Park Service in general and Sequoia National Park in particular, Congress recognized that a framework for the management of Mineral King already existed. The remaining concerns related principally to questions of visitor use. Therefore, the focus of the planning effort has been to examine various types and levels of recreational opportunities that could be offered in the area consistent with sound environmental practices.

BACKCOUNTRY USE

Mineral King has long functioned as a staging area for access to the backcountry of Sequoia National Park and adjacent Sequoia National Forest. Use of the backcountry will be held to a daily quota consistent with trail capacities and the stability of the backcountry ecosystem.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation at Mineral King will focus on the subalpine and alpine ecosystems, since those environments are not generally accessible for onsite interpretation in the remainder of Sequoia and Kings Canyon. Related subthemes include other aspects of the natural environment and the rich and varied human history of Mineral King. Aside from the facility proposed at the Faculty Flat ranger station, the interpretive program will rely on personal services rather than facility development.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

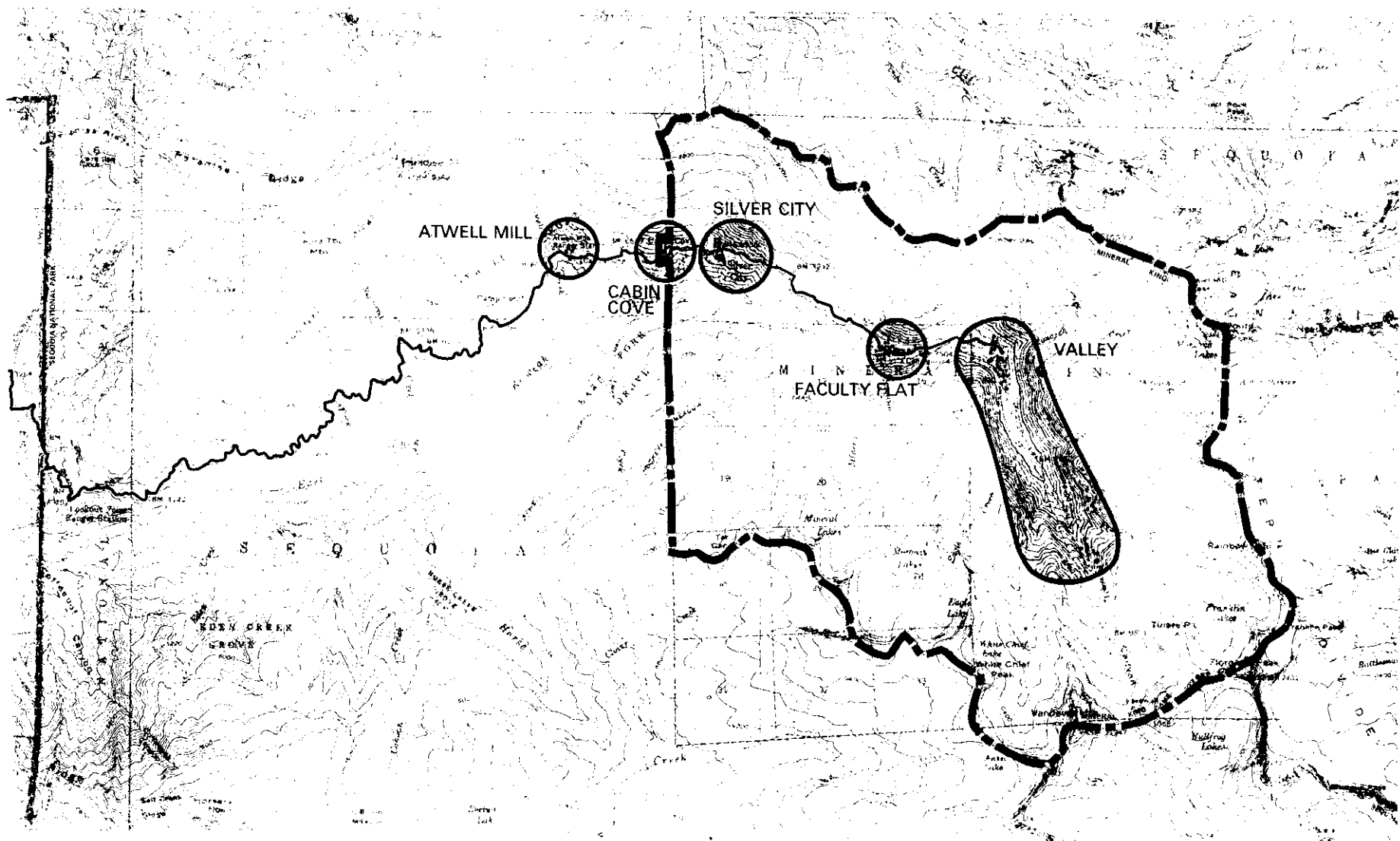
As a district within Sequoia National Park, Mineral King is subject to the resource management goals and objectives developed and approved in the Natural Resources Management Plan for the park. Many of the objectives of that plan are relevant to management of resources at Mineral King, including the management of vegetation, fire, wildlife, and aquatic resources. However, certain resources need to be given special consideration independent of the park's management plan. These include the Mineral King deer herd and four alpine lakes that have been dammed. Transferring the area from the administration of the U.S. Forest Service to the National Park Service precluded hunting. As a result, a program has been initiated with the cooperation of the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service to monitor the population dynamics of the deer herd in the absence of hunting. This analysis will continue, requiring continued consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The management strategy will be dependent on the data produced by the monitoring program. Regarding the dammed lakes, it is recommended that no action be taken. A significant impact is not caused by retaining the dams; therefore, they should continue to function to ensure a dry season water flow for the purposes of power generation downstream.

WILDERNESS

It is apparent from the development actions that lands above 8,000 feet elevation could qualify for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Following completion of the management plan, the steps necessary to seek legislation for formal wilderness designation will be initiated. In the interim, the lands above 8,000 feet will be managed to ensure the preservation of their inherent wilderness values.

LAND ACQUISITION AND PERMITTEE PROPERTIES

Acquisition of private property and the eventual disposition of permit cabins will be carried out in accordance with the policies prescribed by Congress in the authorizing legislation. Basically, private property will be acquired as funds become available, and retained use and occupancy reservations will be granted at the discretion of the owners. Permit cabins will remain for the lifetime of the owner of record.



PLANNING UNITS

MINERAL KING

SEQUOIA / KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS / CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE